

**Amendments to the Claims:**

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

**Listing of Claims:**

1-9. (canceled)

10. (currently amended) An optical coupler for transmitting an optical signal between a first device and at least a plurality of second devices, the optical coupler comprising:

a plurality of optical fibers each having first and second ends, a portion of each of the fibers being stripped, the first device disposed in optical communication with the second end of each one of the at least the plurality of optical fibers, one second device disposed in optical communication with the first end of at least one of the optical fibers, and another second device disposed in optical communication with the first end of at least another one of the optical fibers and with the second ends of the optical fibers being juxtaposed in the first device, a sleeve being provided which surrounds the second ends of the optical fibers and from which the stripped portion of each of the optical fibers protrudes, and further comprising

a first, heat shrinkable sheath that surrounds a stripped portion of each of the optical fibers which extends from the sleeve to a portion of each of the optical fibers that is not stripped, wherein

the sleeve and optical fibers having wicks, and

the sleeve wicks and optical fiber wicks are intermingled around the first, heat-shrinkable sheath.

11. (canceled)

12. (previously amended) The optical coupler of claim 10 wherein each one of the second ends are stripped, disposed side-by-side, and stuck in the sleeve.

13. (canceled)

14. (currently amended) The optical coupler of claim 10 further comprising a second sheath surrounding at least a portion of the first sheath, at ~~last~~least a portion the sleeve, and at least the unstripped portion of each optical fiber.

15. (previously amended) The optical coupler of claim 14 wherein the second sheath is bonded to the first sheath.

16. (previously presented) The optical coupler of claim 14 wherein the second sheath forms a Y-shaped conduit around each one of the optical fibers.

17. (canceled)

18. (previously amended) The optical coupler of claim 10 wherein the first device is a transmitter and each second device is a receiver.

19. (currently amended) An optical coupler for conveying an optical signal comprising:

- (a) a transmitter;
- (b) a pair of receivers;
- (c) a pair of optical links with each optical link having one end disposed in communication with the transmitter, the other end of one optical link disposed in communication with one receiver, and the other end of the other optical link disposed in communication with the other receiver, wherein a stripped portion of the other end

of the one optical link and a stripped portion of the other end of the other optical link are disposed adjacent each other;

(d) a sleeve disposed adjacent the transmitter in which the stripped ends the optical links are disposed; the sleeve and optical links having wicks;

(e) a first protective sheath surrounding each of the optical links and disposed between the transmitter and the receivers; the sleeve wicks and optical link wicks being intermingled around the first sheath; and

(f) a second protective sheath surrounding the first sheath and forming a generally Y-shaped conduit.

20. (currently amended) An optical coupler comprising:

(a) a transmitter;

(b) a pair of receivers;

(c) a pair of optical fibers that each have an outer covering with each optical fiber having one end stripped of the outer covering and connected to the transmitter with the stripped ends of the optical fibers disposed side-by-side with one another; and the other end of one of the optical fibers being stripped and connected to one receiver, and the other end of the other of the optical fibers connected to the other receiver; and

(d) a sleeve that surrounds an end of each of the optical fibers and that is disposed between the transmitter and the receivers, the sleeve and optical fibers having wicks; and

(de) a sheath that forms a generally Y-shaped conduit and that extends about each of the optical fibers, the sleeve wicks and optical fiber wicks being intermingled beneath the sheath.

21. (currently amended) An optical coupler comprising:

(a) a transmitter;

(b) a pair of receivers;

(c) a pair of optical fibers that each extend from the transmitter to one of the receivers with one of the optical fibers extending from the transmitter to one of the receivers and the other one of the optical fibers extending from the transmitter to the other one of the receivers;

(d) an outer sheath that forms a generally Y-shaped conduit and that extends about each one of the optical fibers with one end of the outer sheath overlying at least a portion of the transmitter and the other end of the outer sheath overlying at least a portion of each one of the receivers;

(e) an inner sheath that underlies the outer sheath, and that overlies the optical fibers, and that extends from an end of the transmitter toward each one of the receivers; and

(f) a sleeve that underlies the outer sheath, that overlies an end of each of the optical fibers, and that extends from the transmitter toward an end of both receivers, the sleeve and optical fibers having wicks, the sleeve wicks and optical fiber wicks being intermingled around the inner sheath.

22. (currently amended) An optical coupler comprising:

(a) a transmitter;

(b) a pair of receivers;

(c) a pair of optical fibers that each extend from the transmitter to one of the receivers with one of the optical fibers extending from the transmitter to one of the receivers and the other one of the optical fibers extending from the transmitter to the other one of the receivers; and

(d) a sleeve that surrounds an end of each of the optical fibers and that is disposed between the transmitter and the receivers, the sleeve and optical fibers having wicks, the sleeve wicks and optical fiber wicks being intermingled around a first sheath;

(e) ~~a first sheath that overlies the sleeve and that extends from an end of the transmitter toward each of the receivers; and~~

~~(f) — a second sheath that overlies the first sheath and that extends from an end of both receivers toward the transmitter to form a generally Y-shaped conduit that extends from the transmitter to the receivers and thus has one end overlying at least a portion of the transmitter and another end overlying at least a portion of each of the receivers.~~

23. (canceled)

24. (previously presented) The optical coupler of claim 19, wherein the first sheath is a heat shrinkable sheath and overlies a stripped portion of each of the optical links that extends from the sleeve to a portion of the optical link that is not stripped.

25. (currently amended) The optical coupler of claim 20, wherein the sheath is an outer sheath, and further comprising

~~a sleeve that surrounds an end of each of the optical fibers and that is disposed between the transmitter and the receivers; and~~

an inner sheath that is overlaid by the outer sleeve and that extends from an end of the transmitter toward each one of the receivers, wherein the inner sheath is a heat shrinkable sheath and overlies a stripped portion of each of the optical fibers that extends from the sleeve to a portion of the optical fiber that is not stripped.

26. (previously presented) The optical coupler of claim 21, wherein the inner sheath is a heat shrinkable sheath and overlies a stripped portion of each of the optical fibers that extends from the sleeve to a portion of the optical fiber that is not stripped.

27. (previously presented) The optical coupler of claim 22, wherein the first sheath is a heat shrinkable sheath and overlies a stripped portion of each of the optical fibers that extends from the sleeve to a portion of the optical fiber that is not stripped.